

BIRTH CONTROL AND THE CHRISTIAN

October 3, 1997 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

From time to time we receive inquiries from friends who desire information about birth control. It so happens that in 1986 we published an article in O Timothy magazine entitled "Family Planning and God's Word." In light of recent requests, I have decided to reprint the portion of that article that deals with birth control methods.

There are tremendous pressures upon couples today to practice some form of family planning. Only a few decades ago most couples gave little thought to the matter, but this is no longer the case. Also in the last few decades there has been a tremendous increase in the methods of birth control available, thus making family planning easier.

It is not our intention to address the question of family planning in general. What we desire to do with this article is demonstrate how the various methods of birth control work and to show that there are some forms which no Christian should use. Beyond that, we believe the decision to practice birth control is a personal matter.

BIRTH CONTROL METHODS CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT USE

We have said that family planning is not something to which we can give a simple "yes" or "no" answer. In many aspects it is something that each couple must decide alone before God. Yet at the same time, there are several forms of birth control which are clearly condemned by Scripture and which therefore a Christian is not free to use.

In the following section we will discuss abstinence, abortion, and some kinds of birth control devices--the IUD, certain birth control pills, and the new anti-progesterone pill (RU-486).

ABSTINENCE IS NOT A PROPER FORM OF BIRTH CONTROL

"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." (1 Corinthians 7:1-5)

If a couple decides family planning is God's will for them, the question of method still must be answered. What about abstinence? Some decide to abstain from sexual relations in order to avoid

conception. The New Testament does not allow such an arrangement on a long-term basis. In I Corinthians 7 the Apostle Paul says that one purpose for marriage is to protect men and women from fornication. In marriage, couples are entirely free to satisfy themselves. There is nothing unspiritual about relations between marriage partners.

"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled... " (Hebrews 13:4)

"Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love." (Proverbs 5:15-19)

Abstinence within marriage is not good. It is dangerous! It is, in fact, disobedience to God's Word. The Bible commands Christian couples not to defraud one another sexually.

"Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not authority over her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not authority over his body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other ..." (1 Corinthians 7:3-5)

The husband is responsible to satisfy the wife's physical needs; she is responsible to satisfy his. The only exception is for the purpose of fasting and prayer, and this is only to be for a time--not a permanent or long-range agreement, but a temporary one for special periods of concentrated prayer. Any other abstinence brings increased danger of Satan using the natural desires of the flesh to create situations of temptation.

" ... except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency [lack of self control]." (1 Corinthians 7:5)

Thus, except for brief periods agreed upon by husband and wife for prayer and fasting, abstinence is not to be used as a birth control method.

ABORTION IS NOT A PROPER METHOD OF BIRTH CONTROL

"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? YEA...." (Isaiah 49:15)

It is almost strange that in speaking to Christians about family planning, we would have to deal with the matter of abortion being morally wrong. But the fact is that many large Christian denominations today support "pro- choice." Many Christian leaders are not giving a sure warning against this great evil. In fact, some who call themselves evangelical are beginning to support

abortion for some cases. For example, Intervarsity Press published a book in 1985 called *Brave New People* by Gareth Jones. Consider some quotes from this book--

"If abortion is contemplated, a reasonable decision will take into account the fetus, and also the parents and siblings" (p. 157).

"In this instance it has to be decided whether abortion will benefit the fetus" (p. 158).

"No biblical passage speaks of humans possessing personhood before birth" (p. 169).

"I am prepared to admit there may be circumstances where, very regretfully, even Christians may have to contemplate an abortion" (p. 173).

"Unfortunately, some families cannot cope with such a challenge, and a compromise must be reluctantly adopted, namely, termination of the pregnancy [abortion] ... God's love for the weak ... requires comparable concern for the abnormal and for those likely to be rejected by society" (p. 179).

Because of pressure from various sides Intervarsity stopped distributing the book, but it was published by another Christian publisher, Eerdmans, and is supported by many who claim to be evangelical Christians.

LIFE BEGINS AT CONCEPTION

For the Bible-believer there can be no doubt on this issue. Scripture tells us that human life begins at conception. The moment the sperm unites with the egg, a brand new human life has begun. Many say it is not possible to know exactly when the embryo becomes fully human; thus it should be called a child. The Bible leaves no such confusion. Consider the following:

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalm 51:5)

In Psalm 51 David is showing his repentance for the adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband. In verse five he acknowledges that he was sinful from the moment of conception. This is reaffirmed by the Apostle Paul in Romans 5:12--"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Ever since Adam and Eve rebelled against God, their fallen nature has been passed on from generation to generation through the father's seed.

But notice that David spoke of himself in a personal way even when considering his conception. He said I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. It was David himself who was conceived.

"Thou has covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made ... My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." (Psalm 139:13-16)

For Bible-believers, this amazing passage leaves no question whatsoever regarding whether or not an embryo is a real human child. The writer, David, says that it was God that formed him in the womb of his mother and that God knew all about him even while he was growing from conception--before his little heart started beating at three weeks after conception, before the little buds of arms and legs appeared at four weeks after conception, before his little brain divided into two sections at five weeks after conception, before his eyes took shape at six weeks after conception--"when as yet there was none of them," God knew him. The impregnated egg in the womb of David's mother's was only a tiny, microscopic-size thing, but that impregnated egg was known by God as David, the future king of Israel and great-great-grandfather of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We see that when an impregnated egg is cut off in some way so that it dies, the death of a distinct individual human being has taken place. It is true that many eggs for various reasons naturally fail to become attached to the mother's uterine wall after impregnation and do not therefore mature to birth. But man has nothing to do with that. It is the same with life after birth. Men die in many ways, natural and unnatural. Often that cannot be stopped. But if someone takes a knife or a poison and ends the life of an individual, it is murder. If the murderer argues that the one he has killed would die anyway, or that people die every day so we should not be so concerned, his argument would not be acceptable. He has murdered a human being and will be punished. Likewise, if someone stops the growth of a tiny embryo through drugs or some other way, that person has killed a tiny individual already known by God.

"If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." (Exodus 21:22-25)

Note that the Bible says the woman's unborn fruit is a CHILD. God calls it a child, and if that unborn child is hurt, God required that the one who caused the hurt to be punished.

"As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all." (Ecclesiastes 11:5)

Again, the Bible says the tiny, unborn creature growing in the womb of a woman is a CHILD. It is not a blob of protoplasm, or a thing, or an undeveloped human. It is a child even while the little bones are being formed.

"Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name ... And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant...." (Isaiah 49:1,5)

"Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." (Jeremiah 1:4,5)

The passage in Isaiah refers prophetically to the Lord Jesus Christ, and possibly also refers to Isaiah himself. The similar passage in Jeremiah speaks of the prophet's relationship with God before his birth. Notice again that we see that God called them even before they were born, and it was God who formed them in the womb of their mothers. Those who interfere with the process of growth after the mother's egg has been fertilized are interfering with God's work of forming a human being that is known of God. This is a very serious matter.

If we asked Isaiah's mother or Jeremiah's mother what was in their wombs, they would have answered, had they known the prophecies which were to follow, "This is Isaiah," "This is Jeremiah." Regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible leaves no question whatsoever. "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:18). Later the angel told Joseph that the child's name would be Jesus and "that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:20,21).

As soon as Mary conceived her firstborn son by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, He was called a CHILD. And this was at the very earliest stages of the process of growth in the womb.

"...and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." (Luke 1:15)

It is true that John the Baptist was no ordinary child, but the fact that he was filled with the Holy Ghost even before his birth proves clearly that he was fully a human being. If anyone had aborted that little being in Elisabeth's womb, that one would have been the murderer of John the Baptist.

"And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost." (Luke 1:41)

This passage shows from the Bible's side what even medical doctors are discovering--that the unborn infant is aware of things outside the womb and responds to them. In this case, the unborn baby was John the Baptist. Remember that he was already filled with the Holy Spirit, and he knew of the situation which was happening outside the womb when the mother of his Lord and Savior met his own mother, Elizabeth. Notice, too, that the unborn one here is called a BABE.

With these Scripture references before us we have but two choices--we can reject the Bible and its teaching or we can acknowledge that the fertilized egg is a tiny human being, known by God, and the mysterious and marvelous growth which will occur during its nine months in the womb is the direct process of God working to form that baby according to His own plan and purpose. Any time, therefore, someone interferes with the growth of an embryo he is committing murder.

BIRTH CONTROL PILLS AND IUDS ARE NOT PROPER METHODS OF BIRTH CONTROL

Having considered abstinence and abortion, there are yet some other birth control methods which, when considered in light of Bible teaching, are forbidden to Christians. In brief, any method of birth control that cuts off the growth of the already fertilized egg is a form of abortion and is therefore murder. We have seen that according to the God's Word the human life begins at conception--at the moment when the male sperm joins with the mother's egg. At that time a new and unique human life begins its eternal journey, having become a living soul through the mysterious working of Almighty God. Not all modern scientists would agree that the newly conceived embryo is a human being at that point in time, but all agree that it is a new and unique life that has begun its explosive growth toward full development.

Scientists also know that a new human life begins at conception (fertilization). In an excellent book entitled "The Position of Modern Science on the Beginning of Human Life" (copyright 1975, Scientists for Life) we read the following simple and clear explanation on page 15--

"When did your life begin?" The answer to this question can be phrased simply by going backward in time. Before you were an adult, you were an adolescent, and before that a child, and before that an infant. Before you were an infant--i.e., before you were born--you were a fetus, and before that an embryo. Before you were an embryo, around the time of your implantation, you were a blastocyst, and before that a morula, and before that a zygote or fertilized ovum. However, you were never a sperm or an unfertilized ovum. Therefore, while life is continuous, your life began when the nucleus of your father's sperm fused with the nucleus of your mother's ovum, or at fertilization" The Christian News, Jan. 13, 1986, p. 8).

Because of newly discovered methods of research such as the electron microscope, scientists can now observe the tiny cells and genes which make up a living body. They have actually observed the formation of the human being from the time the genes of the mother and father are united. Consider the following description of what happens during the first few weeks after conception:

"In the [first seven weeks] the cells perform their most intricate maneuvers, arranging into patterns that give the embryo its human form. Toward the end of the third week a gutterlike groove in the back folds into a neural tube--the future nervous system. As the tube closes, the brain takes shape, already differentiating into hind-, mid- and forebrain. The five-week embryo, ONLY ONE-THIRD OF AN INCH LONG, is a marvel of miniaturization: limb buds are sending out shoots whose dimples mark the nascent [beginning to form] hands and feet, and the hindbrain has grown stalked

eye cups. By the seventh and eighth weeks, the embryo's face looks human, limbs hinge on joints, hands splay into fingers and primitive external genitals appear ... After eight weeks almost all of the internal organs are in place and the embryo, SCARCELY AN INCH LONG, looks like a tiny person.

"At this point [eight weeks after conception!], 95 percent of the known structures, features and organs, from tiny nerves to fingers and muscles, are there," says Dr. Ronan O'Rahilly, an embryologist at the University of California at Davis (Newsweek, Jan. 11, 1982, p. 37).

THREE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

To understand birth control methods, it is important to know something about the process whereby the mother's egg is fertilized and grows into a fully developed child.

The process can be divided into three stages--1) Fertilization, 2) Implantation, 3) Growth.

In FERTILIZATION, the father's sperm penetrates the mother's egg. This happens in the mother's uterine tube near the womb. It is at that point in time that the genes of the mother and father are joined to make the new human life of their offspring. At this stage the developing child is called in medical terms a "zygote," which is a Greek word meaning "yoked together."

Next the tiny, growing person continues its travel to the uterus where it becomes attached to the uterine wall. This is IMPLANTATION and occurs between day 5 and 8 and is completed by day 9 or 10 (The Merck Manual, Fourteenth Edition, p. 1708).

The developing child is now called an "embryo," which is from a Greek word meaning "to swell." That's a very good term, because the cells of this newly created little being are multiplying at a breathtaking rate. For a very short time the developing embryo draws its sustenance directly from the uterus until the placenta and umbilical cord are developed.

After this, nothing is left but GROWTH as the baby's body rapidly forms. After approximately eight weeks the child is called by the medical term "fetus," which is from the Latin word meaning "offspring."

The "incredibly intricate and beautiful process of conception" is described by a medical doctor as follows--

"First, there is the ovary, deep within the body, that, propelled by some unknown force, turns once a month towards the funnel-like opening at the end of the fallopian tube. On the surface of the ovary is a tiny bubble, a blister, that contains the one egg that alone, for some mysterious reason, has emerged from a field of 250,000 to ripen that month.

"Suddenly the bubble bursts. Triggered by a surge of luteinizing hormone, an eloquent chemical messenger from the brain, the ovary contracts sharply and the ripe egg bursts forth. The fringed projections at the end of the fallopian tube reach out like fingers to grasp the ovum [egg] and draw it into the narrow tunnel of the tube. In a dreamlike, slow-motion ballet, thousands of tiny, undulating cilia caress the ripening egg and gently move it along on its four-inch, four-day journey to the womb.

"Guided by a direction-finding mechanism whose nature we can only guess at, the sperm swim up past the barrier of the cervix, into the womb itself. They must then navigate the entire length of the uterus and swim into the narrow upper reaches of the dark fallopian tube to meet and fertilize the egg.

"The process is precisely orchestrated, the co-ordination of the myriad of biologic details staggeringly complex. It is, for instance, only at this time of the month that mucus produced by her cervix will allow sperm to pass through the cervix and into the womb. At other times of the month, the molecules of the mucus form a crosshatched pattern to block the sperm lest they reach an egg too young or too old to be properly fertilized, thus producing a deformed baby. At the right moment, though, the molecules of the mucus realign themselves, forming microscopic tunnels to aid the sperm on their journey.

"The biochemical communications system that orchestrates all this is so sophisticated that it makes the technology of beaming planetwide transmissions off orbiting satellites look like child's play. When the sperm finally meet the egg, they secrete a series of enzymes that soften the outer shell of the egg and make it permeable. Meanwhile, other chemicals secreted in the tube have completed the ripening of the egg so it is ready to accept the sperm that has managed to permeate the outer shell. The sperm and ovum lock genetic arms, a mating of a still more complex biochemistry, and the mingled DNA and RNA of the mother and father create a blueprint from which a unique human being will grow.

"Once fertilized, the egg completes its journey down into the uterus. The uterus, notified of the impending pregnancy through an elaborate chemical communications system, has grown thick and rich" (Woman/Doctor: The Education of Jane Patterson, M.D., New York: Avon Books, 1983).

As we have said, any process whereby we interfere purposefully and knowingly to stop the growth of the fertilized egg, which is already a newly created, unique human being, is abortion. If the fertilized egg is not allowed to implant in the uterus, it is being killed. The only difference between this and a later abortion is the size and stage of development of the tiny human offspring.

BIRTH CONTROL METHODS THAT RESULT IN ABORTION

Many of our readers will probably be thinking, as we did not long ago, that birth control pills and similar devices act to PROHIBIT fertilization. Actually, as we will see birth control pills have the potential to produce an abortion AFTER fertilization. The IUD, birth control pills and the new anti-

progesterone pill are actually abortion devices, since they prohibit implantation, thereby acting to destroy the already-living, rapidly developing, microscopic embryo.

In an article entitled "Contraceptives: On Hold" in the May 5, 1986 issue of Newsweek, several types of birth control devices were discussed which were still in the development stage. After describing one drug that blocks the preparation of the uterus for the implantation of an already fertilized egg, this statement is made: "Many experts believe that the present anti-abortion climate would make it an unlikely prospect for the U.S. market, SINCE, IN EFFECT, IT INDUCES AN ABORTION."

That birth control drugs can produce early abortions of the newly fertilized egg is therefore a fact known and acknowledged by those who understand how the drugs work. Yet these facts are not widely known outside of medical circles, and many are ignorant of these things. It is hoped that the following will receive a wide hearing.

The following shocking material was published by Lutherans for Life. The medical facts are written by J.C. Willke, M.D., Chairman of the National Right to Life Committee in America.

The I.U.D.

What is the mechanism of action of the IUD? It would seem at this time that medical opinion has crystallized to a near unanimity. The presence of this foreign body within the cavity of the uterus produces a foreign body reaction. This is a local, sterile (usually), inflammatory reaction, which alters the normal body fluids within the uterus. It changes what had been a friendly environment, for the migration of sperm and the subsequent implantation of the new human being, to an unfriendly environment. Some have described the intrauterine fluid produced as containing "sterile pus." This unfriendly fluid environment can have an influence on the sperm migrating into the uterus and tubes, and quite clearly does have an influence on later implantation.

Not too much has been said or written to indicate that the sperm are incapacitated in their passage through the uterus, for if they were, fertilization could not occur. Most of the research done tells us the same thing. A substantial number of sperm do pass through the uterine cavity, proceed out to the ovary, and FERTILIZATION CAN AND DOES OCCUR.

What is quite plain is that, following fertilization, the process does not proceed to a normally implanted pregnancy. What are the mechanisms postulated as to why she does not "get pregnant"? Overwhelmingly, almost all medical studies have demonstrated various mechanisms that prevent implantation into the nutrient lining of the womb, due to the foreign body and inflammatory reaction caused by the IUD. The end result, however, in almost every case, when fertilization does occur (an occasional pregnancy is carried to full term and delivery with the IUD still in the uterus), IT IS FOLLOWED BY A PROCESS THAT ENDS IN THE DESTRUCTION OF THE DEVELOPING NEW HUMAN IN THE UTERUS THROUGH HIS OR HER INABILITY TO IMPLANT. THIS CAN BE ACCURATELY DESCRIBED AS AN ABORTION. CLEARLY,

ALMOST ALL CURRENT EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT THE IUD'S MAJOR EFFECT IS TO ACT TO PREVENT IMPLANTATION.

The fact that it is described as a "contraceptive" agent is because of a change in the meaning of words by the Food and Drug Administration and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology a decade ago, when they redefined the word "conception" to mean implantation. Under these semantic gymnastics it is a "contraceptive," but everyone familiar with the function understands thoroughly that its action is that of an abortifacient.

One other relevant medical comment should be made. In all likelihood, the IUD possibly could be withdrawn from the market within a reasonable period of time for it has serious side effects. The "sterile pus" mentioned above does not always remain sterile. At times it becomes infected, resulting in varying degrees of inflammation of the female organs and at times sterility. All practicing physicians in the United States were notified several years ago, if they were to insert one specific type of IUD, the Dalcon Shield, into a woman, that it was their legal obligation to inform her that this might make her permanently sterile. To protect from a possible later malpractice suit, such consent should be in writing. In the face of such concern, this specific type of IUD was removed from the market. Whether or not other types of IUD's will remain on the market indefinitely is an open question. It is at least possible that they may be removed for medical reasons before any law can do so (The Christian News, Jan. 13, 1986).

THE PILL

The 'pill' consists of over 30 different varieties of chemical combinations of the synthetic equivalent of the female hormones estrogen and progesterone, as well as the so-called 'mini-pill' which contains progesterone alone. Understanding that there are different degrees of actions with different pills, that one has more of this effect and the other has more of that effect, they can, to some extent at least, be described generically.

The combination pills basically exert three actions in 'preventing' pregnancy. The first effect of the contraceptive pill is to prevent ovulation or release of the ovum from the ovary. This has been described as 'freezing' of the ovary. Even if the sperm do reach the ovary, fertilization cannot occur because the ovum has not been released. This action is accurately described as temporary sterilization, but in common usage it is usually spoken of as 'contraceptive' action.

The first contraceptive pill, Enovid, contained ten milligrams of estrogen- like hormone. It was believed that its physiological function was almost totally that of temporary sterilization. Enovid-5 was then marketed, to be followed by Enovid E (2.5 mg.). Since that time lower and lower doses of estrogen have been presented to the consumer so that now doses of 0.5 mgm. and 0.35 mgm. are commonly used.

The well known reason for the reduction of the estrogen dosage was to try to minimize the threat of blood clot complications.

Paralleling the reduction of the estrogen dosage, however, there has been the development of breakthrough ovulation, as the lower doses have apparently not been successful in completely suppressing ovulation.

WITH BREAKTHROUGH OVULATION IT IS NOW GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT ACTUAL FERTILIZATION OCCURS AT TIMES IN THOSE TAKING THESE PILLS, but as described below, these women do not ordinarily 'get pregnant.' [This means the fertilized egg is not allowed to become implanted in the mother's uterus; it is killed.]

The second action is one of thickening of the mucous plug at the cervical opening. This normally happens at the beginning and at the end of a menstrual cycle, with the plug melting away at mid-cycle, and being replaced by an egg white-like substance containing nutrient fluids, which are 'friendly' to the passage of sperm. The combination pill prevents this from occurring at mid-cycle, maintaining the plug, and as such probably exerts true 'anti-fertilization' action by preventing entrance of the sperm.

The third function of the combination pill is anti-implantation or anti-nidatory. When this is the function that is dominant in the particular month, there is sperm passage, there is fertilization and migration of the new human through the tube and into the uterus, but implantation does not occur. This is because THE ACTION OF THE PILL HAS 'HARDENED' THE LINING OF THE UTERUS, CREATED A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT, AND THE MULTICELLED TINY HUMAN BEING CANNOT IMPLANT. THIS FUNCTION IS ONE OF AN ABORTION AT ONE WEEK OF LIFE.

There is no definitive medical agreement as to what percentage of times this function occurs, in which women and with which pill (The Christian News, Jan. 13, 1986).

THE MINI-PILL

The mini-pill is a form of birth control pill, different from the combination of estrogen and progesterone above. This contains only a small dose of progesterone. It is taken daily, 30 days a month, rather than the 21-7 schedule for the combination pill. It allows a menstrual flow to occur monthly while the pill is being taken. There is considerable controversy as to whether or not its action is primarily in preventing implantation, as other mechanisms of action have been suggested, but general scientific opinion at this time is in substantial agreement. It would seem that IT DOES ALLOW A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF BREAKTHROUGH OVULATION, AND PRESUMABLY AT TIMES FERTILIZATION. WHEN FERTILIZATION OCCURS IT "PREVENTS" PREGNANCY BY AN ANTI-IMPLANTATION ACTION. THIS ACTION IS BEST DESCRIBED AS AN ABORTIFACIENT EFFECT."

THE MORNING AFTER PILL

DES or Diethylstilbestrol is a synthetic estrogen. Given in high dosage, in the days immediately following intercourse, it is known as the morning- after pill. What is its function? This is best illustrated by giving two examples.

In the first, a woman is raped at midnight Saturday and is given DES at 2 a.m. in a hospital emergency room. Within a few hours there is a high level of estrogen in her blood. Her body was programmed to ovulate 24 hours later at midnight Sunday. The high level of estrogen blocks that ovulation, fertilization does not occur, and she does not get pregnant. This effect is one of temporary sterilization.

In the second case, rape also occurs at midnight Saturday and the medication is given at 2 a.m.. This woman, however, has ovulated several hours before the rape. The ovum awaited. It was fertilized. She also does not "get pregnant" but the mechanism of action is quite different. The drug had "hardened" the lining of the womb. THE MULTICELLED TINY BOY OR GIRL, AT ABOUT ONE WEEK OF LIFE, COULD NOT IMPLANT AND DIED. THIS MECHANISM WAS AN ABORTION.

Which mechanism occurs in any specific case may well not be known, but THE STERILIZING ACTION WILL PROBABLY OCCUR TWO OR THREE TIMES FOR EVERY ABORTIVE ACTION.

Other medications, such as a shot of progesterone are often used in place of DES, as well as other forms of estrogen. Without going into detail one can say that their mechanism of action is substantially the same" (The Christian News, Jan. 13, 1986).

PROSTAGLANDINS

As is well known, these substances cause the onset of strong uterine contractions and delivery of whatever size baby the uterus contains. If used before viability [before the baby is able to live outside the womb], this is the equivalent of abortion.

The first form licensed, Prostin F2 alpha, carried a directive from the FDA [Food and Drug Administration] that limited its use to the induction of mid-trimester abortion only. Subsequently, Prostin A2 and 15M have been licensed. These have now been authorized for use for several therapeutic medical conditions (uterine inertia, non-malignant Hyatidaform mole and missed abortion). [This study was reviewed before publication by Matthew Bulfin, M.D.; Thomas Hilgers, M.D.; and Richard Schmidt, M.D.] (The Christian News, Jan. 13, 1986).

The fact that modern birth control pills can and at times do function as an abortifacient (although they will often use different words than abortifacient) is freely admitted by The Food and Drug Administration, by medical books such as Physicians' Desk Reference (PDR) and Nursing '85 Handbook; by pro-abortion books such as My Body, My Health by Felicia Stewart, M.D; by pro-abortion groups such as Planned Parenthood; by drug companies in the literature which

accompanies the pill, and by some non- medical reference books such as Random House College Dictionary. Quotes from these sources follow:

"How the IUD prevents pregnancy is not completely understood. Several theories have been suggested. IUD's seem to interfere in some manner with the implantation of the fertilized egg in the uterine cavity. The IUD does not prevent ovulation" (The Federal Register, Part III, May 10, 1977, Department of Health, Education and Welfare--Food and Drug Administration, "Intrauterine Devices," p. 23781).

In describing the mechanism of Parke-Davis' Norlestrin family of birth control pills we read this notice in the PDR:

"Although the primary mechanism of action is inhibition of ovulation, alterations in the genital tract, including changes in the cervical mucus (which increase the difficulty of sperm penetration) and the endometrium (WHICH REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF IMPLANTATION) MAY ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO CONTRACEPTIVE EFFECTIVENESS" (Physician's Desk Reference, Medical Economics Company, copyright 1985, p. 1548).

This same notice is given for the Lo/Ovral and Nordette family of birth control pills marketed by the Wyeth company (PDR, pages. 2255 and 2266).

"Progestogen ... also causes endometrial changes that PREVENT IMPLANTATION OF THE FERTILIZED OVUM" (Nursing '85 Drug Handbook, Spring House Corporation, 1985).

"In a natural cycle, the uterus lining thickens under the influence of estrogen during the first part of the cycle, and then matures under the influence of both progesterone and estrogen after ovulation. This development sequence is not possible during a pill cycle because both progestin and estrogen are present throughout the cycle. EVEN IF OVULATION AND CONCEPTION DID OCCUR, SUCCESSFUL IMPLANTATION WOULD BE UNLIKELY" (Felicia Stewart, M.D.; Felicia Guest; Gary Stewart, M.D. and Robert Hatcher, M.D.; My Body, My Health, Consumers Union, pgs. 169,170).

"The endometrium (uterine wall) is definitely affected by oral contraception ... THE CHANGE MAY PREVENT IMPLANTATION OF THE BLASTOCYST [the fertilized egg, the newly created offspring]" (Planned Parenthood, Grant Application submitted on September 1, 1982).

"For example, THE PILL MAY AFFECT THE MOVEMENT OF THE FERTILIZED EGG TOWARD THE UTERUS OR PREVENT IT FROM IMBEDDING ITSELF IN THE UTERINE LINING" (Changing Times, "What We Know About the Pill," July 1977, p. 21).

"Birth control pill: an oral contraceptive for women that INHIBITS ovulation, fertilization, or IMPLANTATION OF A FERTILIZED OVUM, causing temporary infertility" (Random House College Dictionary, revised edition, copyright 1982, p. 137).

HOW OFTEN DOES THE BIRTH CONTROL PILL CAUSE AN ABORTION?

One question many people immediately ask is, "How often, granted that every type of modern birth control pill can and sometimes will function as an abortifacient, how often do they function that way? Is it 10% of the time? Is it .00001% of the time? Is it a percentage which is high enough to be significant in my attitude toward the pill?"

Absolute percentages are impossible to obtain. There are too many variables. Yet doctors and scientists are able to obtain realistic estimates from their research. Here are some figures:

1. Planned Parenthood in their grant application state that the hormones in the mini-pill "prevent ovulation and corpusluteum formation in approximately 1/3 of the cycles." That means that 67% of the time women using the mini-pill have a real possibility of a "silent abortion" on any given month.

2. Albert D. Lorincz, M.D. in *The Pill--How Does It Work?* cites a study in which 1200 women were given .5 mg daily of progestogen (an amount equivalent to many birth control pills). Yet 60% of these women ovulated. That means that 60% of the women on this pill had a real possibility of a "silent abortion" on any given month.

3. J.C. Espinoza, M.D., writes in his book *Birth Control: Why Are They Lying to Women?* page 27:

"When ovulation occurs, pregnancy is possible. Years ago Roland noticed ovulation in 30% of the women taking an estrogen-progestin preparation (combined Pill). Today it is clear that in at least 5% of the cycles of women on the combined Pill 'escape ovulation' occurs. This fact means that conception is possible during those cycles, but implantation will be prevented and the 'conceptus' (child) will die. That rate is statistically equivalent to one abortion every other year for all women on the Pill. Mini-Pills have a much higher ovulation rate. Pituitary block to prevent ovulation is evident in only 50% of the cycles. Conception, then, is possible every other month. This new Pill may produce abortion 50% of the time--six for every year of use. The very low dose progestin-only Pill may never prevent ovulation. With any pill there are a small percentage of pregnancies that go to full term."

Some doctors may give somewhat different numbers, but the evidence is clear--every modern birth control pill can and at times does function as an abortifacient. The IUD works strictly as an abortifacient.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I'VE BEEN ON THE PILL OR IUD?

Your heart may be troubled right now. You may have been using the IUD or modern birth control pills without realizing that they could be abortive. You probably are asking yourself, "Could I have

had a silent abortion? Or even several of them? Could I have ended the life of a child which God intended me to have?"

The answer, of course, is that only God knows. It is a definite possibility that you have had a silent abortion, if not several. Nowhere in Scripture does God promise to keep us from committing sins in ignorance.

At this juncture we can praise the Lord for His great mercy. The Scriptures promise, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Also, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

BIRTH CONTROL METHODS WHICH DO NOT DESTROY A NEW LIFE

We have said that any form of birth control which destroys a life that has been created through the binding of the male and female genes is wrong because it is a form of abortion. It can be called "silent abortion," or "microscopic abortion," or any other term, but it is still abortion and as such is a breaking of the fifth commandment--"Thou shalt not kill."

The question remains: Are there any proper methods of birth control which Christians can practice? Is it contrary to the will of God for Christian couples to try to prevent pregnancies?

The first question can be answered much easier than the second. There are methods of birth control which do actually keep the sperm and the egg from uniting and therefore do not involve the destruction of life. We will list these, and for more detailed information a couple can contact their doctor or qualified books on this subject:

1. THE CONDOM. Used by the husband, these are readily available in most areas, are inexpensive and are effective when used properly.
2. VAGINAL FOAMS, CREAMS, AND SUPPOSITORIES. These are used by the wife and are also quite effective when used properly. They immobilize or kill the sperm and in some cases provide a mechanical barrier to the sperm. According to The Merck Manual, "As the woman's age increases, the effectiveness of these agents increases greatly and, in women over age 30, is similar [in effectiveness] to that of the IUD.
3. DIAPHRAGM. This is a device which is used by the wife and blocks the sperm from entering the cervix. It "must be carefully fitted by a physician, and the woman must know how to insert it so that the cervix is covered ... Contraceptive cream or jelly should be used with the diaphragm...."
4. RHYTHM. "For the rhythm method to be successful, the woman's menstrual cycles should be regular. To determine the period of abstinence, 18 days should be subtracted from the length of the shortest of the previous 12 cycles and 11 days from the longest. Thus, if the woman's cycles vary

between 26 and 29 days, the couple must abstain from ... day 8 through day 18 of each cycle. A more effective method is based on measuring the woman's basal body temperature each morning before arising ... Even with this refinement of technique, the failure rate of the rhythm method is estimated to be about 7%; without the use of temperature recording, the failure rate is several times higher" (The Merck Manual, pp. 1699,1700).

Because of the fact that the couple are required to abstain from meeting one another's needs for approximately one-third of the time, I fear that this method is dangerous in light of the warning in 1 Corinthians 7:1-5.

5. STERILIZATION. It is very difficult to reverse the effects of the sterilization operation, and it is said that such reversals are effective only 30% of the time (The Merck Manual, p. 1705). Therefore, this decision should be considered permanent. Since it is impossible for us to know what the future holds, it doesn't seem that sterilization is a wise thing for an individual or couple to do. What if my mate dies and I desire at a later date to have more children? What if something happens to some or all of our children? Sterilization means there is very little possibility that we could have more children.

We are not saying these methods are proper for the Christian, nor are we saying they are wrong. We have listed them merely because they are methods of birth control whereby the egg is not fertilized and therefore a new life is not destroyed.

[Distributed by Way of Life Literature's Fundamental Baptist Information Service, an e-mail listing for Fundamental Baptists and other fundamentalist, Bible-believing Christians. OUR GOAL IN THIS PARTICULAR ASPECT OF OUR MINISTRY IS NOT DEVOTIONAL BUT IS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO ASSIST PREACHERS IN THE PROTECTION OF THE CHURCHES IN THIS APOSTATE HOUR. This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the list. If somehow you have subscribed unintentionally, following are the instructions for removal. The Fundamental Baptist Information Service mailing list is automated. To SUBSCRIBE or to UNSUBSCRIBE or to CHANGE ADDRESSES or to RE-SUBSCRIBE UNDER A NEW ADDRESS, go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbis/subscribe.html>. If you have any trouble with this, please let us know. And please be patient with us. We do not ignore any unsubscribe request, but we cannot always get to your request immediately as each person involved with maintaining the Way of Life web site does this only on a very part time basis and is busy with many other major activities, such as pastoring and missionary work. We take up a quarterly offering to fund this ministry, and those who use the materials are expected to participate (Galatians 6:6) if they can. Some of the articles are from O Timothy magazine, which is in its 23rd year of publication. Way of Life publishes many helpful books. The catalog is located at the web site: <http://www.wayoflife.org/catalog/catalog.htm> Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org. We do not solicit funds from those who do not agree with our preaching and who are not helped by these publications, but from those who are. OFFERINGS can be made at <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/offering.html>. PAYPAL offerings can be made to <https://www.paypal.com/xclick/business=dcloud%40wayoflife.org>]